

CAMP ROBERTS 2002



Paso Robles Press

50 cents

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October 30 - November 5, 2002



The French Spy and the

Tailgunner from Paso Robles

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New engineer units coming to Camp Bob

By Maj Stan Zegotarski

Camp Roberts' rustic World War II era buildings and spacious training grounds are an engineer's paradise as well as an opportunity to tackle the California Army National Guard challenge to improve its training facilities.

Camp Roberts Commander Lt. Col. Larry Kimmel has laid the groundwork for attracting engineers from all branches of the military service to train at the installation. He recently submitted proposals to the 84th Engineer Construction Battalion to renovate 15 buildings at Camp Roberts—including an internet café, barbershop, soldier's service area, and a cappuccino shop. The 84th, (an active duty Army battalion headquartered at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii) recently completed similar work at Camp San Luis Obispo and is interested in returning to the area to assist with other renovation projects.

The 145th Engineer (Construction Support) Company is

scheduled to come on line in 2003 with nearly 150 soldiers and more than 200 line items of equipment—including a rock crushing and screening plant. The company will be headquartered at Camp Roberts with a detachment in Sacramento and will consist of quarry, equipment, asphalt, and maintenance platoons. The company will be part of the 749th Maintenance Battalion under the 49th Combat Support Command's 115th Area Support Group.

"We already have about 25 names to fill vacancies," said SFC Mike Grove, slated to become the company's first sergeant. "We also already have some of the heavy equipment here to launch the company's training."

Young soldiers joining the company will not only have the opportunity to learn engineer military occupational specialties, but also gain potential prospects in the civilian job market. Grove anticipates that

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A Bradley Fighting Machine, an American flag proudly displayed, was the hit of the July 4th Parade in Templeton.

An interview with Major General Monroe

He's the 42nd Adjutant General of California and the 16th Commander of the California National Guard to lead the Guard during times of armed conflict. Major General Paul D. Monroe, Jr. is definitely a man on the move. He not only manages the largest and most tasked Guard force in the nation, he now has the awesome responsibility of overseeing one of the biggest mobilizations in the history of the California National Guard. As of this writing, nearly 5,000 of the California Guard's 21,000 Army and Air Guardsmen have been federalized since the September 11th attacks on America.

Spare time is definitely a rare commodity to General Monroe; his daily work schedule is perhaps the busiest of any of his predecessors. Out of necessity, he divides his time between his office and the Capitol in Sacramento, visits to Army and Air Guard units throughout the state, and to the numerous locations where California National Guardsmen are performing Homeland Security duties. He also makes frequent trips to Washington,

D.C. where he serves as the California National Guard's greatest advocate with members of Congress, the National Guard Bureau, and the National Guard Association of the United States. The affable general is also in high demand for speaking engagements and media interviews. When not involved in one of the many previously mentioned activities, he finds time to make infrequent visits to his home in Berkeley.

Because of time constraints, this interview was sandwiched between a long day of staff briefings and a trip to Southern California for a Town Hall meeting and was conducted by Colonel Ernie Zuick, after working hours, at MG Monroe's apartment, and continued at a nearby restaurant.

ZUICK: Only 16 Adjutants General have ever commanded the California National Guard during times of armed conflict. Did you ever think you'd be one of them?

MONROE: No, I didn't. I thought the most serious thing that might happen would be an earth-

quake or a flood. I knew we had forest fires every year, but I never envisioned this.

ZUICK: Prior to September 11th, one syndicated columnist in particular questioned the California National Guard's readiness. Was there ever a doubt in your mind concerning the readiness of the California National Guard?

MONROE: None, whatsoever.

ZUICK: The California National Guard is undergoing its largest mobilization in history. How does it feel to deploy soldiers and airmen to locations throughout the world and, perhaps, sending some in harm's way?

MONROE: It's the most distasteful part of my job, by far.

ZUICK: Your son was one of the California Army Guardsmen who was deployed. Was that particularly difficult for you?

MONROE: Yes, of course. It's difficult to send any soldier or airmen to active duty knowing they could be sent in harm's way. This was my son's second mobilization in ten years. He's left his wife and baby daughter behind and lost a

chance for a possible promotion in his civilian job. But his sacrifices are no different than those of hundreds of our Army and Air Guardsmen. They're soldiers and airmen and accept their responsibilities and sacrifices as part of their job. They are simply magnificent, and I'm tremendously proud of each and every one of them.

ZUICK: With the War on Terrorism being waged on two fronts-at home and abroad-has this diluted the California National Guard's effectiveness?

MONROE: Incrementally, it has. We've been fortunate in not having any other major emergencies since September 11th. We've been able to respond to the few search and rescue missions and forest fires that have occurred since that time very effectively. But the more federal mobilizations we have, the less of our National Guard force is going to remain in California.

ZUICK: You've recently appointed BG Dennis Kenneally as your Director of Homeland Security for the California National Guard.

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When you think of Medal of Honor winners, do you think of Pvt. Roberts of World War I? Find out who he was at the Camp Roberts Museum.